



Town of Groton, Connecticut

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Meeting Minutes

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Kevin Power, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Christopher J. Burns, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Luanne E. DeMatto, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, Sandry Ramos-Morales, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, October 13, 2010

7:30 PM

Groton Senior Center

Regular Meeting

A. ROLL CALL

*Moderator Kevin Power called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.
24 members were present, and a quorum was declared.*

The Moderator reported that Reps. Bauer, Beckwith, Ebbin, Ramos-Morales, Sebastian, Streeter and Warn called to say they are unable to attend this meeting.

Members Present: Moderator Power, Rep. Ambroise, Rep. Baril, Rep. Barnhart, Rep. Burns, Rep. Collins, Rep. Congdon, Rep. Cooper, Rep. Gilly, Rep. Granatosky, Rep. Harrell, Rep. Hedrick, Rep. Helme, Rep. Kotowski, Rep. Massett, Rep. McCarthy, Rep. Morton, Rep. Pasqualini Jr., Rep. Pratt, Rep. Prochaska, Rep. Semeraro, Rep. Steinfeld, Rep. Svencer and Rep. Swindell
Members Absent: Rep. Bauer, Rep. Beckwith, Rep. DeMatto, Rep. Ebbin, Rep. Fairbank, Rep. Hubbard, Rep. Johnson, Rep. Luck, Rep. Newsome, Rep. Parfitt, Rep. Powers, Rep. Ramos-Morales, Rep. Scott, Rep. Sebastian, Rep. Smuts, Rep. Streeter and Rep. Warn

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Assistant Town Clerk Sally Whitney.

B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The members observed a moment of silence followed by the Salute to the Flag led by Moderator Power.

Rep. Ambroise arrived at this time.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 15, 2010

*A motion that the minutes be adopted was made by Rep. Pratt, seconded by Rep. Steinfeld.
The vote carried 23 in favor, 1 abstention. (Abstaining: Rep. Harrell).*

D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

Bobbi Jo Cini, 316 Groton Long Point Road, Noank, voiced concern about the unprofessional appearance and lack of identification of Public Works employees when entering and working on privately-owned land and on neighboring Town property. She believes that the Public Works budget should be closely scrutinized and reduced. She questioned how members are appointed to RTM committees and how long they can serve on the same committee.

Moderator Power explained that the RTM members are elected and appointed to committees for a two-year term. He stated that members may be appointed to the same committee if re-elected.

E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS

Moderator Power announced that he has appointed Rep. Hedrick as the new RTM Finance Committee chairperson.

The Moderator informed members that at the District 7 caucus prior to the meeting Luanne DeMatto was elected to fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Rep. Bartinik. He noted that Rep. DeMatto has served previously on the RTM.

2010-0195

Groton Long Point Police Budget - Request for Supplemental Appropriation

This matter was Referred to the RTM Finance Committee, due back on November 10, 2010.

Rep. Pasqualini raised a "Point of Order" stating that he believes the actions of the Town Council are improper and constitute a violation of the Town Charter. He noted that the action of the RTM was very clear during budget deliberations and that this item was voted on twice. He feels that the use of Contingency Funds are for expenses that are not anticipated during the budget process or for unforeseen events. He provided examples such as severe winter weather and hurricanes. He believes that this item should not be referred to an RTM committee, nor any action taken until a Town Attorney opinion can be obtained to review the intent and interpretation of the Charter as it pertains to the budget process, and proper uses of the Contingency Fund.

Moderator Power clarified that a "Point of Order" is a non-debatable motion, and not open for discussion. He noted that the individual raising the "Point of Order" is entitled to state his reason and then the Moderator can make a decision. He stated that he agreed with the points made by Rep. Pasqualini but that procedurally the "Point of Order" is not a valid motion. He reiterated that he is referring this to the RTM Finance Committee and it will be on the November meeting agenda.

F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

1. Financial report

Mr. Oefinger reported that the Fund Balance as of September 30, 2010 is approximately \$8.5 million; the General Contingency balance is \$350,000 but the Town Council has approved and referred to the RTM a transfer of \$128,000 for the Groton Long Point Police account; the Capital Reserve balance is \$229,497.

2. Monthly briefing

The Town Manager highlighted numerous items in the Town Manager News. He invited members to attend the Groton Town Police Recognition Ceremony on Thursday, October 21, 2010. The Manager mentioned that the Town Council is expected to approve and refer under RTM rule 6.5.3 a supplemental expenditure of \$225,000 for River Road repairs. He stated that the State DOT District 2 has communicated that the bridge on Route 184 should be completed and open by Thanksgiving. He noted that a public budget workshop is scheduled for Saturday, October 16, 2010 at the Annex to start dialogue on the development of next year's budget. He announced that a public presentation of the newly-defined Thames Street project is scheduled for October 27, 2010.

In response to Rep. Granatosky, the Town Manager explained the issue of the Connecticut State Sales tax in regard to the Town's commercial refuse collection service.

G. LIAISON REPORTS

No reports.

H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. FINANCE

No meeting, no report.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES - Chairman Pratt

No meeting, no report.

3. EDUCATION - Chairman Swindell

No meeting, no report.

4. RECREATION - Chairman Warn

No meeting, no report.

5. PUBLIC SAFETY - Chairman Parfitt

No meeting, no report.

6. PUBLIC WORKS - Chairman Collins

No meeting, no report.

7. RULES & PROCEDURES - Chairman Scott

No meeting, no report.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

2010-0201 2011 RTM Meeting Schedule

RESOLUTION APPROVING 2011 RTM MEETING SCHEDULE

WHEREAS, Freedom of Information Statutes require filing a calendar-year schedule of meetings with the Town Clerk, and

WHEREAS, the Representative Town Meeting has met regularly on the second Wednesday of each month, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Representative Town Meeting hereby approves the meeting schedule for 2011 as follows:

Wednesday, January 12, 2011
Wednesday, February 9, 2011
Wednesday, March 9, 2011
Wednesday, April 13, 2011
Wednesday, May 11, 2011
Wednesday, June 8, 2011
Wednesday, July 13, 2011
Wednesday, August 10, 2011
Wednesday, September 14, 2011
Wednesday, October 12, 2011
Wednesday, November 9, 2011
Wednesday, December 14, 2011 and
Wednesday, January 11, 2012

All meetings will be held at 7:30 p.m. at the Groton Senior Center, 102 Newtown Road, Groton, CT 06340.

A motion was made by Moderator Power, seconded by Rep. Svencer, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

Rep. Collins commented that the Mystic Lions made a donation to the Mystic-Noank Library to help offset the reduction approved during last year's budget deliberations. He requested that Groton residents take the opportunity to speak with Stonington residents to seek Stonington's full funding of their portion of the Mystic-Noank Library budget based on usage figures.

The Town Manager addressed the concerns raised by Ms. Cini under Citizen Petitions. He explained that uniforms are not provided and that personal safety equipment is reimbursed upon presentation of receipts of purchase. He noted that safety hats and vests are available.

2010-0181 FYE2012 Budget Discussion

FYE2012 BUDGET DISCUSSION

Discussed

Rep. Kotowski expressed her concern in regard to the raises authorized for the School Central Office administrative employees which range from 5% to 17%. She believes that the Town and Board of Education (BOE) should be fiscally responsible during the current economic situation.

Rep. Massett requested that department heads be invited to the RTM meetings so that they can specify the impact on specific services or items in accordance with reductions that the RTM may recommend during the budget process. She gave several figures as examples.

The Moderator acknowledged that department heads can be invited to address the RTM concerning next year's budget.

Rep. Swindell believes that the disparity between private and public sector wages needs to be addressed. He asked for a freeze on wages for employees and suggested that the Town initiate contact with the unions now for next year's budget. He believes that the mill rate should not increase for next year. He asked for information on what services would be impacted by layoffs and mentioned that the private sector has suffered layoffs, reduced hours and furloughs.

Rep. Morton would like to develop an RTM recommendation by consensus that the Manager and Town Council provide a budget with a zero mill rate increase.

Rep. Ambrose stated that Social Security payments will not be increased this year. He noted that election results in November may impact both State and Federal budgets which subsequently affect municipalities.

School Superintendent Paul Kadri addressed the wage increases for the Central Office administrative staff. He emphasized that the BOE delivered a zero percent budget increase this year but in order to maintain student success and teacher performance, it is impossible to sustain a zero percent budget increase year after year. He volunteered to meet with RTM members in order to provide details about the phase two school construction projects prior to a referendum.

J. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. was made by Rep. Svencer, seconded by Rep. Barnhart and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the RTM*

Sally A. Whitney, Assistant Town Clerk